



Informational Notes for First Responders and Officials

Bulletin #54 – July 12, 2004
SEMA's Homepage: sema.dps.mo.gov

State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan Approved

On July 2, 2003, Missouri's "Standard" State Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved as an "Enhanced" Plan. On May 21, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved the state's Standard Plan.

The "Enhanced" Plan approval significantly increases the amount of federal mitigation funding that will be available for future disasters. Missouri will now be eligible to receive a 20% multiplier for future mitigation projects within the state. By comparison, if the widespread tornado damage that happened in May 2003 were to occur today, the mitigation funding would be \$5.3 million instead of only the \$2.0 million that was available using the old 7.5% base. This is great news for Missouri's communities.

The "Standard" Plan approval guaranteed that the State of Missouri would continue to be eligible to receive the full range of federal assistance funding provided by the Stafford Act after November 1, 2004.

Additionally with the approved standard plan, Missouri continues to be eligible to receive all categories of Public Assistance. Federal funding from these programs are being applied to public assistance projects such as the City Hall, armory, police station, community center and others in Pierce City, Stockton, Carl Junction and other locations. Without approval of a "Standard" State Hazard Mitigation Plan, only emergency public and individual assistance would have been available beyond the November 1, 2004 cutoff date.

Update on Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

All local governments are still required to develop and obtain FEMA's approval of a local hazard mitigation plan by November 1, 2004 in order to be eligible for Federal mitigation funding. SEMA is working with the 19 Regional Planning Commissions to develop local mitigation plans covering 96 counties and the communities incorporated within those counties. Many of these plans are nearing completion and the remaining plans currently under development should be completed soon. If additional HMGP funding becomes available, SEMA hopes to assist the remaining 18 counties develop plans.

Interoperable Communication Grants Still Under Review

SEMA hoped to announce Interoperable Communication Competitive grant awards by July 1, 2004. However we are not yet finished with the extensive review of the applications received. All of the peer reviews are complete. SEMA is still cross checking these requirements against other grants. We are trying to eliminate duplication and maximize the grant to the extent possible. Announcements will be forthcoming by mid-to-late July.

Tim Daniel Briefs from DHS's Ridge Conference Call

Missouri's Homeland Security Advisor Tim Daniel participated in a conference call with DHS Secretary Ridge on the current threat situation.

Current Threat: based upon current intelligence there will be no recommendation to change the threat level (color code from yellow to orange) but that intelligence analysis indicates that Al Qaeda is moving forward with plans to conduct a major attack or attacks within the United States in an effort to disrupt the American electoral process. Ridge noted that this provides a time frame, from today to the election, where increased vigilance on the part of officials and the public is very important. He emphasized that they do not have specific information but that the sources of information are credible and multiple. There was discussion on the possibility of major multiple and nearly simultaneous attacks.

Implications for Missouri and its major urban areas: State and local officials should use appropriate opportunities to remind the public that we are in a period of "heightened concern" and that their vigilance may become instrumental in the disruption of A-Q plans. State and Local officials should know that while we have no specific information, an attack in Missouri is possible. As we get closer to Election Day local law enforcement and event security staff should be more visible at locations of large gatherings such as sports events, political rallies, concerts, mass transit sites and the like. The owner/operators of venues that host large gatherings should be engaged by local law enforcement to evaluate security levels and to provide security that is unpredictable and therefore difficult to recon.

Critical infrastructure: The federal government is going to move very aggressively and seek the cooperation of local and state officials to conduct an assessment (this will happen very soon) of critical infrastructure that is listed on the FY 2004 National Critical Infrastructure List. Officials will be asked to work with owner/operators to complete a checklist that will assess the preventive measures (security measures) currently in place and then to work with DHS and/or the federal agency responsible for that sector of critical infrastructure to design and implement improvements to the security posture of the facility.

Implications for Missouri and its major urban areas: Local law and fire officials will be asked to conduct team assessments. The list of Missouri critical infrastructure on the national list changes but it numbers about 20 so the impact on local/state agencies to conduct these assessments should be minimal but we have yet to receive the guidance so that judgment may be premature. Missouri's Critical Asset Protection Plan team and the Missouri State Highway Patrol will be asked to help coordinate the effort between law enforcement and owner/operators. Sometimes however DHS and other federal agencies by-pass the state and go directly to the owner/operator or the local agency.

Webster County Seek EMD Applicants

Webster County is taking applications for a full-time Emergency Management Director. The salary is \$30,000. The applicant must have three years experience in a public safety field (first responder, emergency planning, law enforcement, etc.) or a Bachelor's degree in a related field or any combination of education and experience. Good writing and computer skills. For more information contact the Webster County Clerk at 417-468-2223. Send your resume to Stanley D. Whitehurst, Webster County Counter, c/o Webster County Courthouse Room 11, Marshfield, MO 65706. The deadline to submit a resume is August 16.

NOAA Alert and Warning Capabilities to Assist DHS

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) signed an agreement that allows DHS to send critical all-hazards alerts and warnings directly through the NOAA All-Hazards Network. The Network supplements the existing alert and warning resources and the capability to send life-saving information nationally, regionally or locally. In addition, Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will continue to manage the Emergency Alert System (EAS) that includes the NOAA All -Hazards Network.

Under this agreement, DHS will develop an alert and warning message that will be delivered directly to NOAA and broadcast to affected areas. In addition, the same DHS message on NOAA, will be distributed locally or nationally over FEMA's Emergency Alert System (EAS) via television and radio stations.

NOAA will continue to broadcast weather forecasts and warnings, including news about severe storms, tornadoes, earthquakes, chemical spills and bio-hazardous releases; and, in some states, Amber Alerts.

DNR Will Resume Inspecting Dams

The Department of Natural Resources Geological Survey and Resources Assessment Division will resume inspecting regulated dams effective July 1, 2004. Because of budget cuts in FY'03, dam owners were required to hire private professional engineers to conduct dam surveys for required permits. For more information or technical assistance, DNR technical staff in Rolla can be contacted at (573) 368-2175.

USDA Announces \$100 Million To Help Rural Emergency Responders

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that \$100 million is committed for a new USDA First Responder Initiative to support rural emergency responder efforts by prioritizing the financing for needed equipment and services. The initiative will strengthen the ability of rural communities to respond to local emergencies. The following types of projects are emphasized through this initiative: fire protection equipment, police stations, fire stations, police cars, fire trucks, civil defense buildings, early storm warning system, mobile communications center and etc. So far, \$81 million has been obligated nationwide.

Missouri communities receiving funding are: Campbell (Dunklin County) \$31,380 for an Animal Shelter; Weatherby (DeKalb County) \$6,000 for warning sirens; Annapolis (Iron County) \$13,198 for warning sirens; Mineral Point (Washington County) \$6,000 for warning sirens; Leadwood FD (St. Francois County) \$25,548 for a fire station; Concordia (Lafayette County) \$2,318 for warning sirens; Pierce City (Lawrence County) \$14,950 for warning sirens; Duke Rural VFPD (Phelps County) \$2,800 for fire station repairs; Bolckow (Andrew County) \$24,295 for fire trucks; Urbana (Dallas County) \$8,212 for police car; Kennett (Dunklin County) \$13,750 for a refueling station; and Leonard (Shelby County) \$9,700 for warning sirens.

ODP Announces Firefighter Grants (Rounds 5 and 6)

The Office of Domestic Preparedness announced ten Missouri Fire Departments received Firefighter assistance grants. The departments receiving grants for operations and firefighter safety are: Bloomsdale VFD (63,804); Bronaugh Community FPD (\$33,353); Caplinger Mills VFD in Stockton (\$9,036); Desoto Fire & Rescue (\$131,355); Downing Community FPD (\$9,477); and Fortuna FPD (\$74,160).

Departments receiving grants for firefighting vehicles are: Cross Timbers Area RFD (\$45,000); Southern Dallas County FPD in Buffalo (\$72,000); and Tri-Cities FPD in Purcell (\$154,337). The Carrollton FD received \$43,200 for fire prevention program.

FEMA Offers ICS and NIMS Online Classes

FEMA is offering ICS and National Incident Management System (NIMS) online courses that will help first responders understand the concepts and principles underlying NIMS. NIMS builds on the long-used and successful Incident Command System and the proven principles of unified command. Another key feature of NIMS includes communication and information management so that responders and managers across all agencies, professions and jurisdictions have a common operating picture for a more efficient and effective response.

The online course takes about three hours to complete either the ICS course or the NIMS course. The courses can be found at: <http://training.fema.gov>

Terrorism Insurance For Commercial Policies

The U.S. Treasury Department has decided that insurance companies must include coverage through Dec. 31, 2005, for losses due to acts of terrorism in all commercial property and casualty policies under terms and amounts similar to other losses. The Terrorism Risk Insurance Act requires such equitable coverage for a third year. For information, go to www.treas.gov.

New Water Terrorism Preparedness Website

There is an on-line terrorism preparedness guide that addresses the public health and security challenges resulting from intentional acts of water terrorism. <http://www.WaterHealthConnection.org/bt>. This website was developed to assist the medical and public health community as well as public utility and emergency response professionals.

Although it is not realistic to believe that we can prevent the first cases of illness resulting from intentional acts of water terrorism, we could play a critical role in minimizing the impact of such an event by using disaster preparedness resources to help us recognize and manage such an attack in our community. Preparation and access to the ready-made tools available at this website may make the difference between a controlled response to an act of water terrorism versus a public health crisis.

Flood Insurance Reform Act Signed Into Law

P.L. 108-264 was signed into law on June 30. It extends authorization for the National Flood Insurance Program by four years and reforms the flood insurance program. The reforms would give repetitive loss property holders up to six claims before the property would no longer qualify for the federal insurance program. \$400 million over four years is authorized for FEMA to provide a mitigation grant assistance program. The law will also require FEMA to charge the actuarial rate for repetitive loss properties when the owner did not take steps to mitigate after an initial flood.

FCC Adopts Nextel's 800 MHz Interference Plan

July 8, 2004, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unanimously adopted a plan to give public safety officials a large amount of spectrum in the 800 megahertz (MHz) band to prevent radio communications interference. Interference from cell towers and other wireless devices inhibits public safety officials from communicating in an emergency. The FCC, in an attempt to resolve this problem, supported a plan proposed by the Nextel Corporation that requires the wireless company to give up spectrum it owned in the 800 MHz level to the public safety community in exchange for spectrum on another band. Nextel must also pay for and supply the public safety community with new equipment to convert their radio communications over to the 800 MHz band. The FCC estimates it should take 36 months to implement the plan, although court challenges from other wireless carriers are anticipated.